

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

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EDITORIAL

THE Sacraments, according to St Thomas, follow in the supernatural life the order of the natural life. Birth to the supernatural life is found in the sacrament of baptism, growth in confirmation, daily sustenance in the Eucharist and so on. The comparison is, of course, only a parallel or analogy. Yet some of the sacraments are in fact interwoven with their counterparts in the natural life of man. The most obvious example is that of matrimony in which the sacrament is conferred at the time of actual marriage in the life of a man and woman, and continued throughout their married life. Again, baptism is conferred as soon as possible after the physical birth of a child.

But in some cases the connection between the natural and supernatural has been either lost or applied in too rigid a manner. It has been lost sight of to a large extent in confirming young children while the parallel of the sacrament of confirmation in the natural life of man lies in the period of adolescence when the child develops the powers of an adult. Certainly this sacrament is a permanent one, giving as it does a sacramental character, so that the supernatural powers bestowed on the child of seven remain grounded in his soul to be called on as he grows up to become a Christian adult. But many have pointed out in recent years that if the sacrament of Christian maturity was conferred at the time of adolescence it would find fewer obstacles to its sanctifying work. The youth who begins to realize the effect of his natural powers just flowering in their fulness, needs special help to master these powers and direct them towards their fulfilment in the Christian life. It has been suggested that many of the lapses from the faith really occur at this age when the child is still at school rather than after they have left school. The child is already confirmed, but if he was prepared at the beginning of his adolescent stage to receive the sacrament of Christian adulthood, he would be able to appreciate the meaning of this special vehicle of grace and call upon the newly acquired strength of the Spirit to meet the new temptations of a maturing mind and body. To use an hackneyed and easily misunderstood phrase, it would be 'sound psychology' to confer confirmation at a time when the psycho-

logical needs of the youth were requiring the graces of this sacrament urgently.

On the other hand there has been too close an association of the anointing of the sick with the hour of death. This sacrament has come to be called ominously one of the 'Last Sacraments' administered when the Christian is about to die. In modern times, when men seem to be more sensitive to and apprehensive of death, this association with death has impaired the efficacy of the sacrament. Doctors and nurses warn the priest not to disturb the patient or give him any cause for fear or anxiety; the patient on the other hand has been brought up to regard 'extreme unction' almost as signaling a sick man for death, and is consequently often very disturbed at the suggestion that he should be anointed.

In the March issue of *Integrity* (New York; 25 cents) concerned with Death, Fr George Tavard, A.A., writes on 'the Sacrament of the Sick' and points out how the emphasis of this sacrament has changed throughout the centuries. Originally its use was regulated by the passage in St James which refers to it. 'Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.' St James did not ask, 'Is any man dying among you?' Until the eleventh century therefore, as Fr Tavard says, any sickness was regarded as a legitimate occasion for receiving the sacrament of the sick. 'Until that time the unction that we now administer to the dying was commonly received for any disease. A good woman who had hurt her finger cutting wood could well go to the priest and ask for a little of the "oil for the sick". . . . The sacrament of the sick was for the living, not for the dying.' St James's words suggest this for he goes on to say, 'And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him.'

When the sick person is anointed he should have been taught to realize that the sacrament gives him a strength of spirit which may well affect his physical and psychological make-up in such a way as to achieve a cure. True, if God so wills and the Christian's illness is destined to be fatal, then the Spirit strengthens him to meet the final struggle and the onslaught of the devil. But the symbolism of the oil is that of strength and life, not of sinking and death. Fr Tavard writes: 'If sickness is to be accounted for by natural causes, it retains, like everything created, a supernatural dimen-

sion. It occasions an encounter with the Lord, a participation in his suffering, an anticipation of the dissolution of all things that will prelude their renovation. As such, sickness is the fitting framework for the reception of a special sacrament that brings us the reality of which the present world and its frailty are only a shadow.

Perhaps, as we live in an age of liturgical reform, when all the outward ceremonies of the Church are being made more realistic in closer touch with the life of the ordinary man, it may be that the manner of administering these two sacraments will also be restored to something of their early significance. Then confirmation might play a greater part in preventing the leakage of our youth, and the sacrament of the sick be more of a health-giving and comforting act for the suffering. In this way the Christian life of men today would be strengthened and the life of the Spirit given greater opportunity to grow and overcome the special difficulties which now confront it.



CHRIST'S ACTIVE PRESENCE IN HISTORY¹

H.-M. FERET, O.P.

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ.' Those are the first words of John's message to the persecuted Churches. He wished to give them a teaching that would enlighten and comfort them. Although not new, it would be more developed on the person and role of Jesus, 'the faithful witness, First-born among the dead, Prince of the kings of the earth' (I, 5). To give them confidence in the midst of trials, he would make manifest the active presence and entire mastery in temporal history of the risen Lord. The very first doxology already declares this dominant position of Christ in the vision that the exiled apostle will soon unfold:

To him who loves us, and who has washed us from our sins in his blood—and he has made us a kingdom and priests to his God and Father—to him the glory and the power for ages of ages. Amen. (I, 5, 6.)

The first vision (I, 12 *et seq*) further strengthens this impression

¹ Translated from Chapter III of *L'Apocalypse de Saint Jean: Vision Chrétienne de L'Histoire*.

but the book is entirely dominated by the power of Jesus, and that all other teaching derives from this, as a ray of light from its luminous source. Of all the writings previous to the fourth gospel, the Apocalypse may be thought to contain the most developed Christology. It recalls the main themes of the theology of Paul, and those of the primitive catechesis. The fourth gospel itself will only be able to take up again and insist upon the new traits which appear for the first time in the Apocalypse, beginning with the doctrine of the Word. The Christian vision of history that we receive from Patmos is in the first place this: a vision of Christ and of his invisible but sure and irresistible action in history. In the manner of the book itself we will proceed by means of great evocations, successive and complementary, ranging from the close presence of the risen Lord among his own, to his universal dominion as King and Judge of the nations.



The opening visions and also the 'Letters to the Churches' tend to show us Christ's mysterious but very near presence as the first impression about him.

I, John, your brother . . . I heard behind me a great voice. . . . And, being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the candlesticks (One) like to the Son of Man, clothed in a long robe, and girded about the breasts with a girdle of gold. And his head and his hairs (were) white as wool, white as snow, and his eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto brass that is fired in the furnace, and his voice as the voice of many waters.

And he had in his right hand seven stars, and from his mouth there came a sword, two-edged, sharp, and his face was as the sun shineth in its power.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as (one) dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying 'Fear not. . . .' (1, 9 *et seq.*) And again, the beginning of the first letter, that to the Church at Ephesus, which shows him to us coming and going in the midst of the Churches (symbolised as we are shown in chapter 1, verse 20, by the golden candlesticks):

Behold what he says. . . . He who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (2, 2).

And above all, the insistence with which he repeatedly affirms Christ's risen life 'for ages of ages':

And I was dead, but behold I am living for ages of ages (1, 18; cf. 2, 8).

Even the very tone itself of the letters reinforces this impression of the nearness, invisible yet almost sensible, of the risen Lord among the Churches. Certainly the resurrection of Christ is not a teaching proper to the Apocalypse: it was the first subject of the teaching and faith of the first generations of Christians and one already finds in St Paul (Col. 1, 18) this very expression, 'the First-born among the dead', which is one of Christ's Apocalyptic titles (1, 5). What is proper to St John is above all this insistence upon the presence of the risen Lord among the communities or believers. That is where St John sees him and shows him and not in some unknown, distant heaven (1, 12; 1, 20). We may note in passing that what he thus suggests is very akin to the impression given by the fourth gospel in the chapters devoted to the appearances after the resurrection. Here, as there, Christ appears and disappears, makes himself recognized at the very outset or, on the contrary, only suggests, and that by stages, his mysterious closeness. In short, there is this entirely individual way of action of a personal presence. Moreover, here as in the fourth gospel, this presence is not perceptible except to single disciples and to those after them who are capable of believing without seeing. And such was certainly his way of acting at the time of the Apocalypse. He 'walks' in the midst of the Churches (2, 1), ready to eject one from its primacy (2, 5), or to intervene 'swiftly' (2, 16) in the affairs of another; threatening to punish severely the woman Jezebel and those who follow her in her evil ways (2, 22 *et seq.*) or standing outside the door ready to sit at table with any who open to him (3, 20). The Acts of the Apostles also gives this impression in many passages of the risen Christ's invisible action in the conduct of the apostolate, acting himself or acting by the spirit. But no other book of the New Testament is so evocative on this point as the Apocalypse. There is no better commentary than this book on our Lord's words which end St Matthew's gospel: 'Behold I am with you always, even unto the end of the ages'. Before it paints the apotheosis of Jesus and so recalls his ascension into the mysterious heaven of divine glory, the Revelation of Patmos considers it ought to bring out in full relief his

ive presence among the persecuted Church. One readily sees how much comfort such a message could hold. It is of far more heroic value to troops in battle to make them feel their invincible leader's presence in their ranks, than merely to evoke for them the glory which surrounds him in his distant palace.

It is not so certain that we present-day Christians have, as a whole, kept this realization of the first Christians' faith in Christ's resurrection and in the power that it has given him. One should here remark that in consequence of this many will fail to grasp the outcome of John's message in its full relief. If we honestly question ourselves, will not most of us have to acknowledge that our belief in Jesus's resurrection does not differ in its real meaning although perhaps in its formulation—from our belief in the immortality of departed souls. Our belief that he is risen hardly makes us see him as any more active than they in the unrolling of the world's affairs. Certainly we deny neither his survival nor theirs, but practically we fail to distinguish between his case and theirs. We place him, like them, up above our world in that region, disembodied, extra-cosmic, divine if you will, to which men are brought by death. And we well know that with that region we have in no sense any kind of communication, apart from that thought and prayer which brings us into touch with them in the Creator of all these worlds. Whatever may be the influence of the works which they leave behind them or the power of the prayers they offer to God for us, our dead are no longer personages of history. That goes its way without them.

It is to be feared that we have only conceived Jesus Christ's relations with our human world in a way analogous to this, and that we have thus practically denied his resurrection. Like the dismayed women on Easter morning whom the angel already approached with this, we insist upon 'seeking the living among the dead', whereas he has gone before us to Galilee (Luke 24, 5, 6); that is to say, to the heart of this world in which we still move and into which his resurrection has triumphantly brought him back. By so doing, we reduce this resurrection to being nothing but an episode with no morrow, perhaps inaugurating the personal triumph of the Crucified, but with no consequences for the exterior progress of his work here below. But the Apocalypse teaches us that in reality on that day began the triumph of this work of Jesus. Then began the irresistible victory which he must

win over the world, in virtue of the absolute mastery with which he has taken possession of the keys of death and hell. Hence the risen Christ is, though invisible, for ever the first and most active personage in human history.

By what title would he inherit such power? Undoubtedly in virtue of his bloody sacrifice. The passion is inseparable from the resurrection, in the Apocalypse as in the whole New Testament.

'I was dead, but behold I am living . . .' (I, 18). 'I was dead'—rapid bringing to mind of the bloody passion, but it suffices. This is obviously no new teaching. The redeeming passion is clearly at the heart of all New Testament Christology, and our book does not seem to dwell upon it particularly. Rather it evokes the passion always in the context of the triumph Christ won by it. Thus the King of kings and Lord of lords of chapter 19 will appear 'clothed in a garment dipped in blood' (19, 13), just as he is presented under the characteristics of a sacrificed lamb in the apotheosis of chapter 5 (v.6). Even in his sufferings it is Christ triumphant whom the message of Patmos reveals for their comfort to the persecuted Churches.



THE NEW ISRAEL

IAN C. LAURIE

'**H**ATH God cast away his people? God forbid! . . . God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew . . . Even so at this present time there is a remnant saved according to the election of grace.' Thus wrote Saint Paul to the faithful at Rome: to those who had accepted Christ as the promised Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of mankind. For Christ did not found the Church independently of Israel but used the faithful of that nation in the establishing of it, as the prophet foretold: 'For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make to stand before me, saith the Lord: so shall your seed stand and your name.' (Isaias 66, 22.) During his lifetime he prepared his new Kingdom out of the material of the old, and if the old seemed to reject him it was he who in reality rejected those who

refused to acknowledge him as Christ and Lord. So he had charged his Apostles, saying: 'And whosoever will not receive you: when you go out of that city shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them.'

At the moment of his death there was only a tiny minority of Jews faithful to him, yet upon these men fell the seal of God's blessing, and the responsibility of bearing within themselves everything of Israel that the Master had not specifically rejected, thus much which was new. It was at Pentecost, the feast on which the Jews with great festival celebrated the granting of the Law unto Moses, that the Kingdom finally was established as a visible reality with the Spirit of Truth as its perpetual defence and guide. Yet the Christians still went up to the Temple to pray and to preach Christ, the fulfilment of God's promise, yet not to offer sacrifice because Israel had now a more perfect Sacrifice, that of Calvary, which for fear of their unbelieving brethren they celebrated in private 'from house to house'. To the pagan eye there was at first little difference to be discerned between the non-believing Jews and their faithful brethren, so that the citizens of Ephesus did not distinguish between Alexander the Jew and the Christian Apostles. The Apostles did not think of the Church as a rival to Israel but as its continuation, so that to this day it is one of the fundamental claims of the Church that she is the true and historic Israel of God, founded, not to supersede or replace the old, but as its real continuation according to the eternal plan of God.

The Christians no longer obeyed the Mosaic Law in the letter but now in the spirit those parts of it which had not been rejected by Christ. Many of the old customs were still observed out of love for the traditional things: Saint Paul circumcised Timothy because his mother was a Jewess, though he thought that it was in no way necessary to salvation and expressly forbade it to those Gentiles who were trying to come to a compromise between themselves and the Judaisers in order to escape hardship and suffering. Certain customs, however, were expressly retained in order to make it easier for the Jew to accept the Gentiles into the Church, so Peter at the Council of Jerusalem declared: 'It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things

strangled and from fornication: from which things keeping yourselves you shall do well.'

To understand just how much of the old Judaism we, the true Israelites, are rightful heirs to, it is necessary to have a brief look at some of the aspects of that dispensation. The Jews of old were a theocratic nation governed by a priestly council under the presidency of an aristocratic High Priest. This council, the Sanhedrin, which consisted of seventy-two members who were formally installed by the imposition of hands, held spiritual sway over the entire domain of Judaism. The High Priest was the chief of the Jewish priests and the only one of them allowed to enter the Holy of Holies in the Temple. He must be of legitimate birth and without personal blemish, and was considered to be the spiritual head, under God, of Israel. He was consecrated to his high position by the pouring of oil over his whole person, signifying complete dedication.

The ordinary priests held exclusively the right of offering to God the sacrifices of the people in the Temple at Jerusalem. They must be descendants of Aaron and be free from all physical defect. The Temple at Jerusalem was the centre of Jewish national and religious life, and there was offered the sacrifices of the people. Burnt offerings, expressing entire dedication; sin offerings, as expiation for sins; and peace offerings, also called thank offerings, which as well as being animal sacrifices were also a kind of eucharist of which God had warned his people: 'But the soul that eateth of the sacrifice of the peace offering that pertains unto the Lord, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.'

The Scribes were men to whom had originally belonged the job of multiplying copies of the Law, but in time they had become not only copyists but also scholars and expositors. They were given the title Rabbi by the people who regarded them as the lawful exponents of the Law, though in effect they lacked any divine commission to teach such as had the Apostles from Christ. Thus it was said of Christ that he spoke with authority and not as the Scribes, who had none.

The Scribes had the choice of belonging to either of the two major ecclesiastical parties, the Pharisees or the Sadducees. Scribism was identified more with Pharisaism than with Sadduceeism for though there were Sadducees learned in the Law it was the

Pharisaic party that accepted it to the full, and were its practical interpreters.

The Law had originally been confined to the requirements set out in the first five books of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch, but from these the Scribes had built up a complicated structure of observances applicable to every possible situation that a man might encounter himself in. It was in keeping these laws to the very last detail that constituted holiness in the eyes of the Pharisees, so that they taught: 'the multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed'. The greatest Jewish feast was the Pasch, at which was commemorated the exodus of the Jews out of Egypt under the protection of God, and their safe passage through the Red Sea. This anniversary lasted for eight days during which the only bread eaten was unleavened. The Paschal lamb was roasted entire and eaten standing, at a special meal, after which cups of wine were drunk, although this was a later addition made in thanksgiving for the harvest. 'And taking the chalice he gave thanks and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this.'

The second great festival was Pentecost, at which the Jews commemorated the granting of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai, when the Lord had descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof had ascended as the smoke of a furnace, the whole mount shaken greatly. (Exod. 19, 18.) To celebrate the beginning of the new civil year there was held the Feast of Trumpets, on which day ceremonial trumpets were blown and special sacrifices offered up at the Temple.

Another great feast, which lasted seven days, was the Feast of Tabernacles, held in memory of the wanderings of the Israelites in the desert when they lived in tents. During these seven days the Jews ate all their meals in booths or tents made of boughs, while in the Temple special sacrifices were offered up in thanksgiving for God's mercy upon his people.

If these were the major feasts, the Day of Atonement was the great fast, upon which day the people did penance for their transgressions. On this day alone of all the others in the year the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies and there offered up prayers to Jehovah. Then upon a goat were symbolically laid all the sins of the people, the beast afterwards being led out into the wilderness to die. Thus was Israel cleansed from sin by sorrow and the sacrifice of the innocent.

For three years Christ, manifesting his power, worked among the Jews, showing them where they erred and preaching to them true holiness. He gathered around him a small company of fellow Jews to whom he taught by word and example the way in which God would have all men walk. These men he trained to wield the power which until then had belonged to the Sanhedrin—namely, to judge their fellows. Therefore he charged Peter, their head: 'And whatsoever thou shall bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven.' But, even more, he gave to them the power to *forgive sins*.

When with his last gasp passed away for ever the authority of the Sanhedrin, its spiritual responsibilities became invested in the Apostles, to be visibly sealed and revealed in them beyond all denying, at Pentecost. So St Peter, when brought before the council of the Jews, stood fearless before them, confident in the knowledge that he bore the authority of which they, his questioners, had so recently been divested. And more, faithful to the promise of Christ concerning the office of the Holy Ghost, he knew that he could not err in what he said, whereas these men who questioned him had erred, even from the time of their initiation.

As the Jewish leaders, preoccupied with their own personal advancement, had surrendered to the Scribes the office of interpreting the scriptures, so Christ, in whom all things are made new again, returned to his Apostles that most responsible function. Consequently we see St Paul in his epistles interpreting correctly the sayings of the prophets.

The offices of both High Priest and Sacrifice our Lord took upon himself, entering 'once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption'. Thus as had been preserved in a golden vessel within the Holy of Holies a particle of the heavenly manna, so Christ lives now, our living eucharistic Manna, upon our altars. Christ himself became our Thank-offering, establishing peace between God and man. Therefore St Paul echoes the Levitical injunction when he writes: 'But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord' (I Cor. II, 28-29.)

Christianity is called the religion of joy, and rightly so, for

whereas the Jews celebrated the Pasch once a year only, we are festive each time the Mass is offered: it being by the sacrifice of Calvary that our exodus out of the spiritual Egypt was effected.

The passage through the Red Sea we commemorate at Baptism, and Yom Kipur when we express contrition and receive absolution for our sins. No more is the scapegoat sent out to die in the wilderness, since Christ was sacrificed with our sins upon him outside the walls of Jerusalem.

At Pentecost we commemorate the descent, in the midst of a mighty wind and with fire, of the Holy Ghost, and the establishment of the new covenant.

As our history begins with the selection of the Jews as the chosen people of God, so St Paul holds up for the example of the Christian communities to whom he writes the saints of the old dispensation. 'And Abraham staggered not by distrust: but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God' (Rom. 4, 20). St James in his epistle writes: 'Behold we account them blessed who have endured. You have heard of the patience of Job and you have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is merciful and compassionate.' Also: 'Elias was a man passible like unto us: and with prayer he prayed that it might not rain upon the earth. And it rained not for three years and six months. And he prayed again. And the heavens gave rain: and the earth brought forth her fruit.'

If in these faithful men of old, we are meant to see the prototypes of Christian saintliness: so in the holy women of Israel we find an ideal of which Mary is the perfect manifestation. For example, we may come to a greater knowledge, through Solomon's ideal of perfect Jewish womanhood, of Mary, who fulfilled it more perfectly than even that wise king could ever have hoped for. If once it was Esther who saved the Jews, now it is Mary of whom Esther was only a type. We may also learn more about the Mother of God through the examples of Judith and Anna. Indeed, Anna's prayer of rejoicing at the birth of Samuel is too much like the *Magnificat* for anyone who cares to read it not to notice the similarity. 'The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.'

The Church then is not to be thought of as a new tree with the believing Jews grafted on, but rather as an old one renewed, with the Gentiles engrafted in and the unfaithful Jews cast out.

'He shook his raiment and said unto them, "Your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles".' Being then true heirs of the ancients and living like them, as we are, in troubled times, with them we can confidently repeat: 'Behold he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep: the Lord is thy keeper.' God cannot change his mind.



THE LITURGICAL YEAR

F. A. MCGOWAN

IT seems reasonable enough to have a Church calendar. It seems obvious that the chief events of our Lord's life should be arranged round several pivotal feasts and the whole neatly distributed throughout the year. All healthy lives have a rhythm in harmony with the seasons of the year. We plant, cultivate, harvest, let the soil pause in a rest, then begin over again. We mark off anniversary dates of births, deaths, victories, catastrophes. Some are family affairs, but those of national importance are celebrated with a regularity and a protocol which is a test of our patriotism—lest we ourselves forget or lest we fail to pass on the torch to the next generation.

But the Church Year is called the Liturgical Year because it is more than a commemoration cycle. It is one of the four inter-related parts of the liturgy, one of the channels through which the Church communicates to us not the history of the Mysteries of Christ but their very essence. As one great liturgical writer has said very clearly:

... every single event in the life of Christ on earth belongs not only to him personally, but to all men. Because Jesus is God and his actions are therefore divine, we speak of the events of his blessed life as *mysteries*. By this word we mean to indicate the difference between the events or actions of his life and those in the lives of ordinary men. For every word and deed of Christ is alive with divinity. And because he is the Head of mankind, the 'first born of many brethren' (Rom. 8, 29), the

mysteries of Christ belong to all those who through Baptism have been made members of Christ.¹

Therefore, the Church Year differs infinitely from any other calendar organization because it is no figure of speech but a fact that we re-live, with him, the life of Christ. The mysteries are made actual through the Mass. They recur year after year and we grow in Christ by the increase in life that we receive at each celebration. So, by definition, the liturgical year is our gradual growth in Christ through participation in the recurrent actualization of his mysteries.

The question immediately arises: why the recurrent re-presentation?, why year in and year out, with very little change except by the introduction of the new saints in their cycle? The answer is that we may *learn, understand, use* the events of our Lord's life. Repetition is the basis of good teaching. In the Old Testament, when God ruled his people more directly, he set up annual celebrations: Passover, Pentecost, the Tabernacles, the Dedication of the Temple, etc. And every adult Jew was expected to exert himself and make the journey to Jerusalem to participate in these feasts. We need no psychology text to know how short is man's attention span and how much we need reminders of the greatest human factors influencing our lives. But there is a deeper basis of need when we are dealing with divine life. God has not limited us to one chance where we must take all of him we can hold. Our Lord knows our ever-growing need for him and he is always ready to meet it. Our Lord knows from experience how gradual is our physical and mental growth. We recall the words of St Luke (2, 52): And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men. He could not grow in divine wisdom but he could always increase in experimental knowledge. One of the basic thoughts of devotion to the Sacred Heart, which is devotion to the divine-human love of our Lord for his Father and for us, is the realization that until God became man, he could not know *by experience* our human emotions. So he awaits us with eagerness and understanding as we come each year with the new accumulation of experimental knowledge to contact the mystery and draw from it what we could not have done the previous year. This Easter, the mere fact that we have lived twelve months more

¹ Sister Jane Marie, O.P., *Living in Christ*. (Ann Arbor, Michigan, Edwards Brothers, 1943, p.58.)

and have known people who have been born or died, physically and spiritually, makes us better able to understand and to use the Risen Life.

Like all acts of religion (the word means re-linking), the Liturgical Year has a two-fold purpose which it accomplishes however, in its distinctive way. The two-fold purpose of every act of religion is to glory God (honour him) by sanctifying and hallowing ourselves. The particular way which the Liturgical Year offers for us to glorify God is re-presenting the events of our Lord's life and making possible our association with Christ in the historical acts which glorified the Father. The particular way which the Liturgical Year gives us to sanctify ourselves is by making possible our reception *now* of the graces which Christ merited for us at the moment of his historical life.

The Liturgical Year, as we said before, is infinitely more than a commemoration cycle, because it is centred on the Sacrifice of the Mass which re-presents each time *all* the mysteries of Christ. The proper of the Mass, as will be seen by reference to some special Masses, highlights one or two of these mysteries by the choice of the gospel. In the Requiem Mass, those who have died are associated through and with him who died for them and us. The offerings which represent us all, but them in a particular way, become, at the Consecration, our Lord's *living* Body and Blood. He who says that he is their Resurrection and Life is present in the sacramental mode but in the glorified state, for he can die no more.

We remind ourselves that the liturgy never stops short at a completed ceremonial act. The divine-human energy it communicates is to be expended and developed in Christian living. 'Put ye on the mind of Christ'—a full-time job and a life-long one. The Liturgical Year centred upon the Holy Sacrifice influences and sets the mental tone of the other hours of our day. It gives unity (systematic variety) to our lives. It gives this more obviously at Christmastide, Lent, and Easter, but, with a little cultivation, we can include other phases of the Church Year. Many families have the habit of Saturday evening preparation of the next day's Mass. It can be well done in ten or fifteen minutes (by one's self in five). Frequently, where this has begun with a mother and one child, it has drawn in everyone who can read. Three or four minutes of silent reading of the Proper. Then the

father or mother poses a set of four or six questions—something like these. What is the special tone tomorrow (keynote)? The smart ones will soon get it from the Introit. What do we ask for specially tomorrow? where? (The Prayers.) How does our Lord show himself? (Gospel.) What resolutions does he inspire? Other methods of studying the Mass will be suggested.

After Mass we can choose a phrase or sentence from the Proper and make it into a chanty or ditty as we go about our work. An Advent, 'The Lord is nigh' or 'Prepare ye the way' makes a good accompaniment for sweeping, walking, scrubbing, dusting, or even watching the mixer whirl. During Lent, we can select something for every mood; some like to repeat the words of the Good Friday hymn, 'From the tree Christ has reigned'. One can also some vigorous thumping to the rhythm of 'The Lord is risen, *as He said*'. We are all childlike enough to want periods of anticipation, a build-up towards a celebration, then the big event followed by retrospective enjoyment of souvenirs and the discussion of details. There are various sacramental ways, all of them inexpensive, by which we can prepare for Easter and Christmas and at the same time counteract the too evident commercialization. It is Halifax's honour to have initiated the movement to bring Christ back into Christmas. There is the practice of the Advent wreath which intensifies the longing for Christmas as the spaces of the four weeks are filled in. In one western Archdiocese of the United States, each family was asked to express concretely the fact of Christ's birthday by serving at supper on Christmas Eve a cake with white icing and a single candle. This cake was to be announced in the home beforehand, referred to constantly during the last week of Advent. If possible, every able-bodied person should assist in the mixing, some way or another. Non-Catholics were so impressed at the children's chatter that many did the same for their families. Most of us have hot cross buns on Good Friday and we could arrange to have on Maundy Thursday a Passover dinner of roast lamb, lettuce, a vegetable that corresponds to lentils, and wine jelly dessert. Two book suggestions may seem to touch two extremes: Mrs Berger's cookbook, subtitle, *The Liturgical Year in the Kitchen*,² and Father Parsch's

² Florence Sudhoff Berger, *Cooking for Christ: Liturgical Year in the Kitchen*. Des Moines 12, Iowa: National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 1949. 127 pp.; illus. \$2.50.

guide to the study of the Lenten Masses.³ . . . from the Mass we carry the mystery into the home and workshop. As we see, the Liturgical Year integrates all the phases of our daily lives.

Pope Pius X said:

The primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit is the active participation of the faithful in the most holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church. (*Motu Proprio*, 1903.)

And Pius XI, instituting the Feast of Christ the King:

For imbuing the people with faith and leading them by faith to the interior joys of life, the annual celebrations of the sacred mysteries are far more efficacious than even the most weighty documents of ecclesiastical teaching . . . (these celebrations) appeal to mind and heart, that is, to the whole man.

The Liturgical Year offers the most regular method of divine direction, especially in adult life. Through the liturgy of the Sunday Mass we all come in contact with Christian instruction. It is astounding how much dogma is expressed concretely in the Proper. This fact furnishes another way of preparing the next day's Mass. As for each part: which truths of faith? which lessons of Christian morality? which suggestions for prayer?

The Liturgical Year meets the needs of our personal development by recurrent re-presentation. It integrates truths on a new level of intellectual growth. Those who have been asked to help certain Catholics, morally good but intellectually bored, find the usual remedy is introduction to the Missal and a start in living the Liturgical Year. Too often these adults have been trying to carry on with the prayers to the Baby Jesus learned at the time of their First Communion. Active participation in the Liturgy by dialogue Mass has opened up ways of union with our Lord which will never lack freshness nor promise of excitement because there are the changes in the Proper and because each year one comes with greater capacity to the feast. The Liturgical Year arouses emotions and dispositions befitting our maturing responses to the beauty of Christ—and by beauty is meant the splendour of truth, the shining forth of his justice tempered by mercy, the flashing of his moral indignation restrained by his patience.

The Liturgical Cycle, each year deepening and widening our

³ Pius Parsch, *The Church's Year of Grace*, V.2. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1953—5 v.; \$3.00 each volume.

knowledge of an event in our Lord's historical life, evokes more purposeful and more willed desires to correspond in conduct with the mysteries actualized. It inspires more sincere petitions for divine help because we recognize the need of supernatural means to accomplish supernatural acts. And the greatest difference between any other commemorative cycle and the life of our Lord as far as our living is concerned is that the Liturgical Year bestows the graces proper to the mystery. The structure of the Liturgical Year can be considered first, then the Proper as the means by which the Liturgical Year draws from the Holy Sacrifice as from its source.

There are two cycles but the frame of the structure is the Cycle of Redeeming Mysteries, pivoted about Easter, and for the most part movable in date to accord with the shift in the Paschal moon. This cycle is also called the Temporal Cycle, or the Proper of the Time. Interlocking with it is the so-called Sanctoral Cycle or the Proper of the Saints in which the feasts are celebrated on definite calendar dates. The latter includes some feasts of our Lord—the Precious Blood and the Transfiguration; all of our Lady's except the Lenten feast of her Dolours; and all feasts of the saints. Besides these two cycles there are the seasonal Ember Days: Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays: 'post Lent, post Pent, post Crux, post Lux'—after the First Sunday of Lent, Pentecost Sunday, Feast of the Holy Cross (September 14th), and Feast of St Lucy (December 13th).

In the early centuries of our Christian era, the Church year began with Septuagesima. Christmas was celebrated in various places on different dates—in March, June, September and December. To check the abuses surviving from two pagan feasts, that of the birth of the sun during the week of the twenty-first of December, and that of the legal New Year on January first, it was decided to Christianize both. The 25th was chosen for the Birthday of the Sun of Justice which made its eighth day, New Year's, the Feast of the Circumcision. At the time that the Church came out of the catacombs, Advent was an eight-day period. Gradually it lengthened so that by the tenth century it was six weeks in many places, five weeks in others. In the Roman liturgy the similarity of the last Sunday after Pentecost to the First Sunday of Advent is a reminder of the former five-week practice. Now, Advent must consist of four Sundays; the last may coincide with

Christmas Eve. The *Gloria*, formerly only sung on Christmas Day, is not sung, and other signs of joy are hidden so as to achieve a great climax on Christmas Day. We consider the promises of a redeemer and live with Elias, John the Baptist, and our Lady in expectation of his arrival. At Christmas, as his birth is actualized in the Holy Sacrifice, we celebrate his coming under five aspects: There is reminder of his natural sonship, the only-begotten of the Father from all eternity; there is commemoration of his birth of the Blessed Virgin at Bethlehem in time; there is his rebirth each year in our souls by grace; there is foresight of two great comings—the individual summons at the end of life when we go forth to meet him, and Judgment Day when he will return in awful Majesty.

At the Epiphany, he is shown to representatives of the Gentile world; that is where most of us come in, and our gifts are mentioned in one of the three poetical prayers of the Roman liturgy, the Secret from the Mass of the Epiphany:

Graciously look down, we beseech Thee, O Lord, upon the gifts of thy Church: by which gold, frankincense, and myrrh are no longer laid before Thee; but He is sacrificed and received who by those very gifts was signified, Jesus Christ Thy Son Our Lord.

Easter is the greatest day of the Church Year, not Good Friday. Our Lord came not just to die for us but to restore life. We celebrate the Pasch now at the same time as the Jews do. By the time of our Lord, it was established that the Pasch was to be in the week after the first full moon after the spring equinox, for the very practical reason that this enabled pilgrim bands to travel by the Paschal moon, the better to escape attacks of brigands who hung along the routes to Jerusalem. But it was the great spring festival, the feast of new life; and now the Christian is invited to spend a good two months preparing for it.

The three Sundays of the Septuagesima season form a transition period from the high gaiety of Epiphany to the sober days of Lent. Lent, in strict terminology, ends when Passiontide begins, but the term is used somewhat generally to cover the period from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday. Formerly, the Lenten fast, which was very severe, began only on the day after *Laetare* Sunday, which explains that day's unexpected festive tone; it was the last fling. Now it is *mi-Carême*. During Lent we live an intensi-

fied life with our Redeemer. During Passiontide, the church decorations are covered, even the crosses because they were often richly set with jewels, and the symbols of mourning are introduced. During Holy Week, we try to live day by day the events of our Lord's last days before his death. From his side, when the Sacred Heart was pierced, the Church was born.

During Eastertide we celebrate the resurrection of the Redeemer, his apparitions as he consoled his followers (and his deserters) and as he established the Church. The transitional feast of the Ascension is the glorification of the Redeemer's Humanity. And on that day Limbo was emptied; our Lord took with him the souls of the saved, and transferred them to heaven.

On the Jewish feast of Pentecost commemorating the fiftieth day after the great Sabbath, the occasion when Moses received the Commandments, the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles. English-speaking Jews call it Confirmation Day and it is the occasion when those boys who are over eleven and who are declared sufficiently instructed by the rabbi, through the ceremony of the Bar Mitzvah, enter the estate of spiritual adulthood. It may have been on the occasion of this feast that our Lord was lost and found in his Father's house.

Then comes a summary trilogy of feasts: we celebrate the Source and Goal of the redeemed on Trinity Sunday; the memorial of redemption, the Holy Eucharist, on Corpus Christi; the motive-force of Redemption, the divine-human love of our Lord for his Father and for us, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

The Sundays after Pentecost show the fruits of Redemption, the growth of the Mystical Body. For the first seventeen, the focus is on its spread and development here on earth. Then comes a break, another transition trilogy, this time of the Mystical Body. On the last Sunday of October, that is, the one nearest to the first of November, the Church on earth proclaims Christ the King. On November the first, the whole Church Triumphant in heaven is honoured, and, on the next day, according to the Roman martyrology:

The commemoration of all the faithful departed; whereon Holy Church, their common Mother, after being careful with fitting praise to celebrate all those her children who now rejoice in heaven, striveth also to help all those who still groan in Purgatory by her suffrages, which are of avail before Christ her Lord

and Spouse, that as speedily as may be, they may attain to join the society of the citizens on high.

The proper of the last Sundays after Pentecost focus on our Lord's Second Coming until we are back again at Advent.



THE LATTER YEARS

MARY ANGELA LOFTING

THE latter years of a Catholic who has held the faith from birth, and practised it consistently on an ordinary working level, represent a period when much that supported the soul falls away, when former spiritual helps are shed and life is left with only the necessities for carrying on. As on the natural physical level these years are a stern test of the individual, of his traditions, good sense, the breadth of view experience has brought him, so the soul taking stock of its spiritual resources looks back to the things that have remained and receives its last challenge of final perseverance. Thus the sum total of what life has taught on both levels lies open now in behaviour and reaction to circumstance.

The parable of the workers in the vineyard, the same penny for the man who had worked in the heat of the whole day, sets something of a seal on these latter years in the discipline of its measure and right understanding. That we were given these last years bespeaks their necessity for our co-operation moving with the times. Now or never is complete integration of body and soul essential for fruitful endeavour.

It has been possible in earlier years to carry on a spiritual approach to living whilst still maintaining considerable division between body and soul, for even under circumstances of some hardship and difficulty we are upheld by our natural imagination. The future is still our own as far as we can see and full of possibilities; the wildest hopes might still be realized, given half a chance, despite the day-to-day hum-drum realities. Does not nature herself thus lure on all humanity?—and we should not be her normal children if anything less than time taught us the whole truth.

Of necessity then our religious outlook is caught up with something of the same enervating hopeful power and the soul's constant cry of 'All things are possible with God', whilst emitting a warm glow en route, has not really much value compared with hard-working faith carried out daily in co-operation with divine assistance, for such prayers lacking in rightful worship and understanding are not of a realistic nature and so defy subsequent translation into deeds. This somewhat childish approach to our religion often remains far on into our spiritual life. We love all the beautiful things of our Faith, we are moved by its external manifestations, being led by its 'letter' rather than its 'spirit' along a road where even the discipline of its rules and regulations bear a strong resemblance to a training, something to be gone through for a reward, rather than an attaining of pliability of body to spirit in growth and status. In short, our devotions with no matter how capital a D, and even the Mass and the Sacraments themselves, are enjoyed or 'gone through' in dry periods—are left safely, or sadly as the case fits psychologically, *in their own sphere* whilst Brother Ass pursues his avocations. Not that we do not try to 'be good' as the children say, like children, we do, but the method does not stand up to an adult life in this world. We are mature in all worldly matters, even sophisticated, but mere dreamers full of youthful spiritual dope in our religious outlook and working.

It can be a long wasteful period carried on through the assistance vouchsafed to us from within the Church by its priests and the truly religious people we come in contact with on account of our obvious good intentions; but there comes a time through many a small storm calmed over by such influences when we shipwreck on to what we deem to be realism—or worse still, we drift. It is hard to knock sense into the soul; no matter how hard life may eventually hit the body into it, if there exists little or no integration between them and the finest religious friends tend to fade in the face of facts we ourselves have to face in our own way just because they are ours and ours alone. There is not much we can really share in life of pain and sorrow and dire decision—only joy is of universal communication. We can endure, it is true; but our creation being in a Christian tradition calls for something of a different order to stoicism. Neither is the answer to be found in the blind acquiescence summed up in the ubiquitous

tragi-comic Irishman's attitude to affliction, 'It's the Will of God'. No, our whole Catholic training is towards an understanding, a seeing, a co-operation in the divine plan.

The knowledge—perhaps a truer word is the information—from continual ordinary experience is the priceless gift of the latter years. In its simplifying, clarifying light, people and events are better focussed, we find an approach to all and sundry, realizing in turn that the greatest knowledge in man only represents one line of thought in an immense human field, that the most superficial mentality has its flashes of insight, that the 'unlettered' guided by the heart reach conclusions which baffle many an educated head, and through a widened understanding of our fellows we ourselves obtain some balance in human and spiritual affairs which leads us beyond ignorant judgments. We can honestly re-act in the full meaning of the dictionary's meaning of the word—produce a reciprocal or responsive effect—in our contacts with our fellows, and through this grace of charity's enlightenment and the well-worn repetitive experiences of our own spiritual road, sense something at last of God's working and move in *with* it, no longer kicking against the goad.

If this is the virtue and fruit of age's role, several snags are to be met with in working towards its fulfilment. Foremost perhaps the instinctive reticence bred of a long life, but the value of a silent tongue can be over-estimated, even turned vice from apathy; that *laissez faire* attitude of the mind's own coddling, really keeping ourselves out of any possible trouble. We tell ourselves that time will sort the problems out for the other man, that there is no good served by our saying or doing anything, that the years must take their course for us all, etc. In a general way all this may be strictly true. Far better not to meddle is a sane principle and one well learnt. But it is to be regarded with generous good sense; for liberality of mind is something quite as great as that generally understood by generosity of character. Indeed it often entails more labour in its working and far greater surrender. Things have to be so *well* said to achieve their object and opportunities swiftly and bravely caught or wisely long-sought for a mind's successful impression. Sometimes such courageous risk entails a whole friendship where a worldly-wise or even a silent tongue glossing over the situation would save it for *oneself*. To give the easy answer, one that experience has taught

to be pretty false, can save a lot of trouble, make for smooth sailing, or be a good bid for popularity which the oncoming years faced with loneliness thinks to cherish. All such mental selfishness deep-rooted in self-preservation can be a terribly insidious growth choking the potentialities of an honest mind's experience.

The second great snag belongs to a character of the other extreme—a natural attitude to a life of 'Martha' busy about many things which tends to force itself upon some of us with time's relentless accumulation of affairs and contacts; it seems to be to us such an excellent sign of a sustained interest in life, but through it rings our Lord's warning to which we are deaf. All our native capability is so well trained with long practice; we can make on too much so easily, familiarity with the ropes entangles us unwittingly; we make a pace we cannot sustain with either profit or sense and are brought to a standstill exhausted suddenly unconscious of the balance of the scales and the years' limitations. In the face of such hard lessons a simple return to the Lord's solution, 'Mary has chosen the better part', is the obvious line of conduct—to sit back and pray. A short Retreat is the ideal, but at any rate a deliberate spiritual breakaway, with no time wasted in vain regrets, allowing ourselves to be acutely conscious that such native capabilities as ours can work *equally for the soul's profit* given its fair chance on a spiritual level; we know ourselves by now—it's a question of re-direction of energy, towards integration in point of simple fact.

All the worth of the latter years is entirely individual in its working. Any comparison with our neighbours' powers are as destructive to its vitality as indulging in useless sorrow over our own intimate past. It is essentially a period where spiritual values must triumph, where, 'casting all our care upon the Lord', we work quietly and sensibly 'while it is day', thinking constantly of God, seeing him in many guises, knowing from all that we have learnt that he really is our *sole* support and finding in this certain knowledge release from anxiety, a simplification in living, genuine integration of body and soul—wholeness. Towards this comprehensive outlook all our energies must be continually directed; we can afford nothing less—'God alone sufficeth'. We shall discover it for ourselves at last, and, like St Teresa, can tell ourselves continually: 'Let nothing disturb thee, Nothing

affright thee, all things are passing, Alone God sufficeth' as a well-beloved hard fact, the only one that can stand up to our ordinary daily life.

According to our particular spiritual road we have probably by now the types of books that suit us, but to read the new approaches to the everlasting values, to be in with the search for truth that will last while man exists on this earth, is part of being here, a real live part. To read always what is familiar rather than seeking anew is an attitude of mind badly rooted in age. It is a stultifying weakness for both body and soul. If it is true that we cannot live to ourselves alone on the physical plane, it is equally true on the spiritual. We need fresh thought for any full life, it is the very air of it here below. And although we may, up to a point, feel that we know what we have learnt, possess a sound foundation and have our own approach to the Faith, we cannot gauge the other man's point of view, or line of procedure, without keeping up with him, be he of our own specific creed or not. His methods, if not his entire line of country, are possibly different. A new jargon about an old matter, it may seem to some of us—quite likely—but we must be able to understand it in order to be equal to it. Nothing static is of any value mentally.

The easiest way to find one's level with current thought is *via* books. A great many of them will not be to our taste, but they give information which we can assimilate in our own way quietly, soberly appraising their modern note. We shall find that even the Bible—the mainstay and prop of our days—in Monsignor Knox's new translation very strange in places, cutting across many of our own cherished quotations; we may not accept its public usefulness, but it remains one of the most significant steps in the Church towards religious integration, having a naturalness in its approach to the Word of God as something spoken down the ages to succeeding generations. And the Lives of the Saints are brought 'up to date' with this same fundamental idea; even the Mystics have their own pyschological and analytical interpreters. St John of the Cross's great Canticle has been rendered into modern verse that all may follow according to their spiritual insight; and religious works at every level abound in styles varying from journalese to scientific wording well matching the latest discoveries in several fields of research. To us older people this is all fast going. We have to pick our

ly intelligently; but to find our way is essential as a fitting
lude to all further advanced features such as the Mass in slow
tion film-wise, broadcast services (actually so unlike Benedic-
n in our own churches), exhibitions of our religious orders on
vertisement lines, vocation booklets which seem much on the
ne principle, the institution of evening Masses, the relaxation
the fasting regulations, even the possibility of the use of the
macular emanating from the Dialogue Mass, etc. We have
ubtless our private feelings in all the transition as older wit-
sses, but we cannot deny that it all tends to a 'coming alive' of
e divine truths to all and sundry, as well as meeting half-way with
ny of the needs of the times, particularly, in vocational matters,
psychological difficulties. Indeed, looked on as a whole with
sweeping backward glance, we see that it all amounts to a
ferent method on the same road as that of the popular devo-
ns of yesterday, which when analysed in all their multiplicity
ere an attempt in their day to convey religious knowledge into
ily life. The old methods were an appeal to sentiment—to the
art, if you will, instead of the head. They were in keeping with
e trend of that age and the level of its masses. Today with
orld-wide education, and the ultra-modern accent on it, we
ust endeavour to interpret the mysteries of the Faith as best
e may with our human minds to meet this swift advance.
ranted that some of the methods seem pretty bald, that reverence
ould appear to be at a low ebb, still a naturalness of approach is
enuinely sought and some common understanding is the key-
ote of it all and much must go down before this crying necessity.
ielding nothing of our own position bearing our traditions,
ide-eyed in the face of it all, but quite tolerant, learning with the
st, we can play our appointed part linking it sensibly with the
st, recreating from our experience and thus contributing to the
rength of the chain. The tragedy is that so large a proportion of
—now, alas, greatly in the majority since the two wars—
eglect this opportunity through selfish inertia or abuse it
ith constant destructive criticism so that the future, as we blindly
ersist in thinking of it instead of facing the fact of its elusive
esent for most of us, is deprived of a worthy contribution that
e were left in the Vineyard to supply.

A chance remark made by an acquaintance recently brought
ome to me how completely the fundamental workaday structure

of our Faith is seen by some of us. She had just returned from visiting an invalid relation who always grumbled 'at being left here' in that pathetic manner of the self-pitying. 'I told her straight', she reported in her blunt way, 'that is just the point you are always missing: you would not *be* left here if there wasn't still some work for you to do.' 'Oh, that simple faith!', we may murmur in our own intellectual hard-going. To be envied. Possibly. But to each man his own road, the divine Spirit hovering over all—a single movement—that is the universal lesson.

One fact cannot be overstated and should be constantly in our minds balancing judgment—the speed with which the enormous changes have come about in our day. There is no parallel in history. The vast problems of East and West, the coming together of the whole world with air travel, the gigantic discoveries of Science in *every* field, these were all at our door overnight. No wonder human repercussion takes some understanding and handling. Can any defence be great enough for all the superficial reasoning, for the rootlessness of human relationships, for the desperate nervous debility that fills our hospitals, for a younger generation's strange moral sense, or total lack of it, whilst displaying a physical endurance and backbone that calls forth our greatest admiration? We ourselves are part and parcel of these immense human problems. Time has not parted us from them as some of us would like to pretend. That we fit in helpfully among the rank and file is the constant and last prayer that life demands of us.

SCRUPLES AT CONFESSION*

WALTER HILTON

Edited by CLARE KIRCHBERGER

*Master Walter Hilton in a pistil made to a Christian friend newly
ned to our Lord Jesu, which was troubled in his conscience, writeth
on this wise.*

TO thee dear brother in Christ our Lord send the spirit of counsel and of ghostly strength. Thou writest to me that thou art troubled and tarried of thy might and married¹ thy conscience for thy shrift, for thou would shrive thee plainly all thy sins and thou cannot, and therefore thy grace is withdrawn from thee. And thou makest this skill thereto.² Since shrift is the gate of all the sacraments and of grace also, and thou mayst not come to clear and plenary confession, how shalt thou then come to any other grace? And therefore I wot well thy soul is tormented and thy mind is in great bitterness. Forsooth nevertheless our Lord Jesus shall soften thy sorrow by his mercy when he likes. The sorrow that thou sufferest is great, nevertheless it is wholesome. Look that thou be strong of grace neither mistrust nor despair. Thou feelest thyself full of pride, thou canst not void nor tell it. Thou shrivest thy sins as they come to mind in time of confession, and nevertheless thou trowest not that thou art verily shriven. For thou feelest the same remorse after thy shrift as thou didst before, and peradventure more sharp. Thou beginst to ransack thyself and thy mirkness and blindness waxes ever more thick; in so mickle the more thou ransackest thyself, the less findest thou thyself. Thou desirest light of understanding to

MS. Brit. Mus. Add 33971, fol. 72 sqq.

I am indebted to Mr A. I. Doyle for the loan of the photostat of this MS., and to Miss Russell-Smith, who has pointed out that it bears some relation to an unedited MS. of a later epistle attributed to Hilton. Our MS. appears to be a translation and adaptation of the middle section of this epistle which was addressed to a lawyer friend. In it Hilton discusses his vocation. He was recovering from a time of sickness and imprisonment and Hilton suggests that he should abandon his legal profession, not enter a monastery, but follow his vocation in the world. The part about confession occurs in the middle of the argument. Miss Russell-Smith points out that Bale said it was addressed to one John Thorpe, whom she identifies several times in documents between 1391 and 1461. But he may also have been a relation of the Carmelite of Norwich known to have lived between 1428-1440.—C.K.

married: hindered.
distinction, reason.

know thyself and thy sins, and by that thou seekest rest of thy conscience, and it flees from thee. Also thou sayest that thou trowest well in the sacrament of penance but in thyself is all the default, for thou canst not shrive thee in such form and such words as were needful, nor so declare thy sins as thou hast done them. And therefore thy soul is greatly troubled. And therefore thou askest if it be enough to say, 'I have been proud, I have been covetous in heart, in word and deed', and so to tell the common circumstances of pride and of covetousness and of other sins. Thou thinkest that it is not enough unless thou tell all the circumstances of thy sins, and thou thinkest that thou canst not do as thou shouldst, and therefore thou thinkest that thou receivest not the sacrament and art not assoiled (absolved). Also thou sayst for the third, that there are many sins that thou didst long since, and some of them are forgotten, some knowest thou not and of them wast thou never shriven purely and wholly, and therefore thou wot not what thou shalt do. Also for the fourth article, thou drest that thy sins are not forgiven in thy shrift nor in contrition before thy shrift, for cause that thy conscience bites thee as sore and sorer as if thou hadst not been contrite nor shriven. Also for the fifth article, thou sayest that thou hast more sorrow that thou canst not shrive thee of thy sins than thou hast for the same sins. Also thou sayst and writest that thou prayest and thee thinketh that it is naught worth. And thou sayst also that thou (canst) not pray for biting of thy conscience and mind of thy life. Also that thou art tarried and tempted as many new turned are, for when they feel such painful biting of their conscience after shrift, they trow not that they are soiled (absolved), and therefore they go again to shrift, oft and many times as (if) they would void vexacions of their conscience by oft shrift, and nevertheless they find no rest of conscience, but the oft they shrive them for that cause, the more are they travailed in conscience and blinded with that mirkness. And of that it falleth that they fall into deep heaviness, scarcely will they take any counsel remedy or comfort. These are the vexacions.

Our Lord grant grace that the angel of counsel Christ Jesu send from above the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the which give his counsel in thy doubts and comfort and strengthen thee in thine adversity. Nevertheless trusting in the same spirit of counsel, somewhat will I answer to thee as our Lord will give me grace.

As to the first, wit thou well and trow verily that as the root of all sin standeth in this that a man's heart from God unchangeable is turned to the love and liking of a creature that is changeable by inordinate love,³ right so destroying, putting out or washing away all sin standeth principally and groundly in the turning of man's heart from the unruly love of any creature and full turning to God by very contrition and pure intent of the heart, therefore in the turning of the heart and the love to God; for from God standeth the ground and the beginning of all good and ill. But the turning of thy heart from God by unruly love and wicked will comes of itself, and the turning of thy heart to God by love and good will comes of grace alone. But among the tokens of grace, a clear and evident token is compunction of heart, as ugliness⁴ of sin and misliking and sorrow for the doing, plenty of tears if they come, and a desire to please God; the which tokens if thou hast them thou feelest them, so that they may not be hid from thee. By these tokens thou shalt trow steadfastly that grace is infused to thee, and by the virtue thereof steadfastly trow that all thy sins are forgiven thee by grace. All sins, I say, but not all pain, for thou art born to pain for thy sins. Then when thy sin is done away by contrition, whereto doubttest thou of shrift? Wit well that God receiveth the turning of the heart and that accepteth it principally and alone. For if the heart be turned by very contrition, it is ready to confession by that same turning. Of this turning of the heart saith the prophet David: *Sacrificium Deo spiritus contritulus, cor contritum and humiliatum Deus, non despiciet.* (Ps. 50, 19.) A spirit troubled is sacrifice to God and thou shalt not despise a contrite and a meek heart. And in another place says the wise man: 'those things that are seen or heard or open to men, but soothly God giveth tent to thy heart'. For the forgiveness of God is white and smart,⁵ for the prophet saith: *Velociter currit sermo eius* (Ps. 147, 15), that is to say: God's word runneth swift. For the grace that it putteth in the soul by compunction, putteth away all sins and abideth not nor tarrieth not to the time of confession. For soothly, the mercy of Jesu cometh before in a lenteous grace and stirreth the heart to repentance, and in a moment ere the twinkling of an eye it washeth away all stink of

Possibly 'that a man's heart turning from God, etc.'
 horror.
 smart=promptly.

sin, were it never so old or customed. The ensample in the Gospel: Mary Magdalen, how stinking she was when she came to our Lord's feet, but while she washed his feet, wiped, anointed and kissed them, her self was washed and wiped from all sin and soothly she was anointed by grace and kissed by perfect peace between God and her.

See how soon the mercy of our Lord Jesus forgiveth; he abideth not the confession of the voice for he heard the confession and the conversion of the heart and that he desireth and abideth. And if I shall say the truth, he alone worketh that conversion⁶ and that contrition in the heart, and therefore he heareth soon that voice of the heart, which himself maketh therein.

Trust well that by all this I mean not to hinder confession, that God forbid! but I worship it and will keep it and praise it entirely and use it. But I mean to declare to thee a manner how thou shalt understand it. In confession and in all other sacrament are two things and these are the thing of the sacrament and the same sacrament;⁷ or else thus: the substance of the sacrament and the outward token of the sacrament. In the sacrament of penance the same forgiveness, the same reconciliation to our Lord, the same forgiveness of grace, it maketh thee of a manciple of hell into the son of grace and the heir of bliss, that is the substance or the thing of that sacrament. And this is given by our Lord by sudden turning of his eye of mercy, and in thee received by as sudden turning of thy heart to compunction and contrition. And this turning is of thy heart to compunction and contrition, and the turning is given⁸ sometime of the sacrament and sometime before the sacrament, or the tokens of the sacrament.⁹ In shrift are these two: acknowledging of thy sin by tongue, or in a dumb man by token of thy sin, and absolution of the same sin by priest. Then when thou hast the substance of the sacrament, that is forgiveness of sin by grace infused, thou art not fully siker but in the article of need of deadly sin, is my meaning.¹⁰

What shalt thou do more? Then thou takest the sacrament with the substance; thy sin is forgiven, but thou needest to meek thee

6 The text has 'conversacioun' which may be an error or correct in view of the next clause.

7 The thing is the 'res'. 'Self' is used for 'same'.

8 text 'forgiven' probably an error.

9 Possibly 'the taking of the sacrament'.

10 Obscure, perhaps 'yet thou art not fully sure except in the case of mortal sin'.

confession. By the substance art thou reconciled to our Lord and to the Church over command of heaven¹¹ (?) and made a limb thereof; by the token of the sacrament art thou reconciled to Holy Church fighting in earth and made a limb thereof. See example in the Gospel. Our Lord raised up Lazarus but he bade his disciples loose him from his bands. The disciples gave not Lazarus life, for he was raised before, but they loosed his bands only.

Our Lord with his word alone giveth life. As in Lazarus bodily, on this day does our Lord ghostly. For when our Lord calleth a ghostly dead man out of the grave of ill conscience, in the which he is buried by wicked custom, life cometh as fast, and the soul is quick and all the old stink of sin is away suddenly. Now the man had lived, now is he whole, what is then more to do? Soothly it is he sent to the disciples, that is to say to the ministers of Holy Church. Whereto? that he be declared quick, to say Holy Church his mother, and that she was cause of joy, and to say, as the father said to his son in the gospel, when he came and sought him: '*Gaudere oportet, quia filius meus mortuus fuerat et revixit*' (Luke 15, 32). That is, I am glad that my son which was dead is now quick again. And also that his mother Holy Church loose him of bands that he is bounden in. One of the bands is pain of purgatory. Of the which band the confessor looses the penitent, that is to say him who repenteth his sin fully, when he assigns him sufficient penance for his sin, if he do it. And beyond that, that he give him not full penance, he has power to release a part thereof by the keys of Holy Church.

Thou grantest well that thou trowest well in the sacrament of penance, that is shrift of mouth, and absolution of the priest. And thou knowest also the virtue of the substance of the sacrament, that is very contrition of heart, by the which God forgiveth the sin. But thou sayest: 'This is my woe, that I cannot express my sin as I should or as I did it.' And also those questions that thou askedst, as I rehearsed before, in the second article. To all this answer, thou art astonied with a weak dread, for default of faith. Trowest thou not that by infusing of grace into thy heart, by the which thou feelest compunction and misliking of sin, and a very purpose to turn thee from sin, with the help of God, that all the sin is forgiven thee and the filth of thy sin out of thy soul:

'by the command of heaven' or,

Then if thou with this wilt come to Holy Church and meek thee to the minister thereof, and thou in full willest to show al thy sin, with the circumstance, that thou (acknowledgest) them without feigning or departing of thy shrift and also without excusing, putting away all shame, as meekly as is in thy power without doubt thou receivest the sacrament.

If thou be letted that thou canst not, nor mayst not for the time shew them (the sins) each one by themselves, peradventure for hearty sorrow of them or simpleness or uncunning or forgetting or distraction of mirkness of mind that falleth on thee that time, yea in so mickle that thou canst not say but that thou knowest thee a wretched sinner, hugely proud, covetous, envious, wrathful and vengeable, and other sins thus generally, and hast mickle sorrow that thou canst not say them, I doubt not that this is enough, and thou receivest verily the sacrament. Forsooth our Lord looketh not after many words, but he looketh after a good will. He giveth no tent after mickle speech where he findeth a good will and a pure heart. Take ensample in the Gospel. Our Lord says to his disciples, 'When ye pray speak not mickle as heathen do, for they hope that their prayer is heard for they speak mickle. But when ye shall pray, say: *Pater noster, qui es in celis, sanctificetur nomen tuum, etc.*'

Behold our Lord blameth not that christian man that maketh speech in prayer, for himself teacheth them to pray in speech, but he blameth that man that trusteth in his fair words and crafty speech in his prayer, as if he should ask a prayer of a lord or of another man and trust that he should overcome him with fair speech or subtle skills. Right so in shrift, God is well paid that a man shrive him as well as he can. But our Lord blameth that man that setteth his faith in mickle speech and troweth not that he receiveth the sacrament unless he shew all his sins and each one of them by word, right as he trespassed. That is vain; but it is needful that a man tell his sins generally and specially, with such words as is true and pure, and sheweth soothfully the turning of thy heart and loathing of sin. And specially there is enough in spiritual sins that are far from man's wit, which is right fleshly (than in the fleshly sins). Do man that is in thee for the time of shrift, hide not wilfully nor excuse not, and that is enough.

(To be concluded)

THE PSALMS FOR SUNDAY VESPERS

Translated by SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

These translations, which have been set to music by Anthony Ner, are made from the Hebrew. They preserve closely the metrical pattern of the originals, based on a sequence of strongly stressed syllables; they represent the same arrangement of stanzas, and admit the frequent irregularities of Hebrew verse.

PSALM 109

Dixit Dominus

Quoth the Lórd to my lórd:

‘Sit thoú on my ríght,

Till Í set thy foés

As a stoól for thy feét.’

Thy scéptre of stréngth

The Lórd séndeth from Síon:

Rúle in the mídst of thy foés!

Thy peóple come freeé

On the dáy of thy pówer

In sácred appárel—

From the wómb of the mórníng

To theé comes the déw of thy yóuth!

The Lórd, he hath swórn it unchánging:

‘Thoú art a priést everlásting,

A priést in Melchisedech’s mánner.’

My lórd at thy ríght hand

Sháttering kíngs

In the dáy of his wráth,

Júdging the nátions,

Heáping the deád,

Sháttering skúlls

Througħ the wide wórlð. :

7

At a broók by the roádside he fréshens him,
His heád but to ráise up once móre.

PSALM IIO

Confitebor tibi, Domine

1

All my heárt will I ráise to the Lórd,
As I stánd in the Chúrch of the júst.

2

Greát are the wórks of the Lórd:
Seék them and fínd there delight.

3

Hónour and glóry his lábour,
And his jústness endúreth alwáy.

4

His wónders he héld in remémbrance,
The grácious compássionate Lórd,

5

Meát he provídes for his súbjects,
His prómise he éver remémbers,

6

His own prówess he tóld to his peóple,
To máke them the héirs of the wórld.

7

The wórks of his hánds are true jústice,
True fáithfulness áll his commánds,

8

True soúndness was theírs at the máking,
Etérnal and sólid they stánd.

9

A ránsom he sént for his peóple,
As prómised by précept etérnal,

10

And nów, The beginníng of wísdom
Is féar of the Lórd's holy Náme:
Good príze this for áll those who seék it:
His práise which endúreth alwáy.

PSALM IIII

Beatus vir, qui timet Dominum

1

Blest is the mán who féars the Lórd,
In his commánds delíghts exceédingly;

2

Stróng on eáarth his seéd,

Blést the júst man's líne;
His weálth abóunds at hóme,
His jústness stánds alwáy.

Dáwn in dárk awáits the júst,
The úpright, grácious, kínd;
Wéll with the kíndly, génerous man,
Who órders wéll his lífe;
Éver stánds the úpright,
Néver ís forgót,
Évil wórds he féars not,
His stróng heart trústs the Lórd.
Fírm and féarless héart!
He fáces hóstile gáze;
Scátters bouúnty to the poór,
His jústness stánds alwáy.

His shíning stréngth alóft
The wícked seé; and ráge,
They grínd their teéth, and wáste away,
Their évil hópes dísmáyed.

PSALM 112

Laudate pueri, Dominum

Praíse ye the Lórd, o his chíldren,
Praíse ye the Náme of the Lórd;
The Náme of the Lórd, be it bléssèd
Nów and for éver and éver.

From the dáwn of the dáy until súnset
Praised be the Náme of the Lórd;
Far abóve all the wórld is the Lórd,
His glóry far óver the ský.

Who is líke to the Lórd our own Gód?
Who sèts his abóde in the héight,
Whose gáze be dównward bént
To loók on heáven and eárh,

- 7 Who raises us from the dust hápless,
 From the áshes exálts us forlórñ,
 8 To máke us to sít with the prínces,
 The prínces eléct of his peóple;
 9 Who gíves to the chíldless a hómestead,
 And chíldren, and mótherly jóy.

PSALM 113 (*first part*)*In exitu*

- 1 When Ísrael stróde out from Égypt,
 Men of Jácob from álien fólk,
 2 Then Júdah was túrned to God's Témple,
 Ísrael becáme his domaín.
 3 The seá then behéld and took flíght,
 The Jórdan then rólled itself báck,
 4 The móuntains then dánced they like ráms,
 The hílls like the yóung of the flóck.
 5 What áíls thee, o seá, that thou fleéest?
 O Jórdan, that róllest thee báck?
 6 O móuntains, that dánce ye like ráms?
 O hílls, like the yóung of the flóck?
 7 All the eáর্থ, it is seízed with a trémbling,
 In fáce of the Lórd God of Jácob,
 8 For hé can make lákes of the róck-land,
 Form flínt into búbbling spríngs.

★ ★ ★

PSALM 113 (*second part*)*Non nobis Domine*

- 1 To ús no glóry, Lórd,
 To ús no glóry,
 But glóry tó thy Náme
 For thy true lóve.
 2 Whý shall the págans exclaím,
 'Whére is their Gód'?

For our Gód he abides in the heávens,
His will he fulfíls;
But their ídols of sílver and góld
Are but wórk of men's hánds:
The líps of them líps are unspeáking,
Their éyes are unseéing,
Their éars not a múrmur perceíving,
Nor nóstrils a frágrance,
Their hánds, they are hánds without feéling,
Their feét without pácing,
They útter no crý in their throát.

Beréft like to thém be their mákers!
Beréft all who trúst them!
But Ísrael trústs in the Lórd,
Their hélp and protéction;
Men of Aáron, they trúst in the Lórd,
Their hélp and protéction;
The Lórd's trembling sérvitors trúst him,
Their hélp and protéction.

The Lórd forgéts us nót,
He gíves us bléssing,
Bléssing Ísrael's Hóuse
And Hóuse of Aáron,
Bléssing trémbling sérvants
Greát and lówly.

May the Lórd give an íncrease to yoú,
To yoú and your chíldren;
Bléssed are yoú of the Lórd,
Who made heáven and eárh.

The heávens, the heávens are hís,
But eárh he gáve to mén,
The deád, they sháll not síng him,
Nor thóse in sílent tómb,
But wé, o wé will práise him
From nów and éver móre.

REVIEWS

NELLA PRESENZA DI DIO. By Divo Barsotti. (Florence, 1955, L.750.)

LA RIVELAZIONE DELL'AMORE. By Divo Barsotti. (Florence, 1955, L.1350.)

Both these books lay special emphasis on God's love centred in Jesus Christ as the main feature of the life of the spirit. The first gives the substance of monthly retreats taken down in notes by a religious, Sr Maria Giubbi, and covers the years 1948-1950. The religious vocation is represented as a divine call to follow Christ our Lord, akin to that of the Apostles. Such a call is creative in character since it is charged with a divine efficacy, not only placing the person chosen in a new state, but giving the soul the capacity to move forward to perfection in the following of Christ as a living person intimately loved, and as the main preoccupation of life. This will inevitably mean self-forgetfulness and abandonment to the will of God, expressed in prayer and intimacy with the beloved.

The second book is more scholarly in style. It deals with the subject of God's love as revealed in the Old and New Testament, first as a shadow, and then in the full splendour of Incarnate Love. With the covenant between God and Abraham begins the true religious history of the world, beginning the manifestations of God's love for men. And so the story continues looking forward to a greater promise and fulfilment recorded in the pages of the New Testament, which is not only a written account of God's growing intimacy with his people, but a life-history of God's love incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord. God is by nature changeless; there cannot be any opposition between that which is old and what is new. The God of Abraham, of Moses, of Elias, of the Prophets, and of the Psalms, is the self-same God who loves, none other than the heavenly Father of whom Jesus speaks. In the Incarnation something happened: God's love sprang to life in human flesh. Judaism, by pinning all its faith and hopes in the Law, saw in it the fulfilment of prophetic utterances, and so was blinded from seeing the true fulfilment of all that had gone before in the revelation of God's love by Christ's death upon the Cross. Herein is found the true realization of all expectations, whereby God is reconciled to his people by a divine triumph over sin and over death. This is the theme that runs through the whole of the New Testament.

From these few casual remarks it may be gathered that the two works are complementary. The latter is especially helpful for gaining a better appreciation of the New Testament in the light of the Old.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

OUNDING THE LIFE DIVINE. An Introduction to the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. By Morwenna Donnelly. With a Foreword by A. Basu. (Rider; 12s. 6d.)

This is a scholarly, a lucid and (on the whole, in Miss Donnelly's part) a concise and idiomatic account. The use of 'the subconscious' for the subconscious, of 'the vital' as a rather bizarre noun, and of noun agglomerations like 'Truth-consciousness' may irritate, but at defects of style in spiritual writers modern English Catholics should be the last to cast a stone. In translating into English terms and syntax much that is strange to them the book is an improvement on the English work of Sri Aurobindo himself. A selection from this, as well as bibliography, given in an appendix, there is a useful glossary, and Professor Basu contributes a valuable summary of the main Indian yogas (*Hatha, Raja, Jnana, Bhakti, Karma* and *Tantra*) to which Sri Aurobindo's yoga is the heir.

This 'integral yoga', founded specifically on the *Karma* yoga of the *Upanishads*, but with a three-fold basis and 'way' in the yogas of knowledge, love and of works, favours on the whole, as its means, the opening of the heart by *Bhakti* in love, rather than of the head by *Jnana* in knowledge. It has two distinctive aims of particular interest to contemporary Christians. The first, shared (and with more reason) by Catholic writers who try to express and stress an 'incarnational' as distinct from a neo-Platonic spirituality, is to see the contemplative life, not in terms of withdrawal from the world or from the life of sense and reason, of imagination and feeling and action, but simply in terms of detachment from these things. The second, an aim which Père Régamey discussed in his article, is to bring about, not merely the 'liberation' of the individual, but through him of the human family itself, in the emergence of a new spiritual man to replace the 'intellectual' man, whom we take, says Sri Aurobindo, as an evolutionary end instead of an evolutionary stage.

But Sri Aurobindo is very insistent that for all this 'grace' is a necessity, that real liberation is never the result of human effort (although human effort is needed to co-operate with grace), and we are led therefore to ask whether, or how far, his yoga fulfils those other requirements of a Christian yoga which Père Régamey has set out.

First of all it must be said that it does not wish to fulfil them. Sri Aurobindo deprecates Christianity as merely ethical or ritualistic in this world and spiritual only in the next, or—in those admitted contemplatives like St John of the Cross who do not fit into this generalization—as too attached to faith rather than experience, and as following the 'dark way' of 'negation' (abnegation?) and embraced suffering, which he admits as a way, but not either as the best and safest way, or

as a way possible to offer to men at large. He realizes of course that the contemplative must, in his complete surrender, be prepared to accept suffering, but protests that he should neither seek nor welcome it, that it is always a sign of imperfection. There is here an understandable reaction against cults (masochistic or not) of suffering for its own sake and without revelation of some sort, I think, the attitude of the reasonable man would always be this. But (given that one can avoid, as Miss Donnelly does, being involved by it in finding our Lord, the vicariously suffering 'Avatar', imperfect) those who have once seen with the eyes of faith the dark and foolish Way of the Cross will always perhaps want, humbly and as God wills, to take that way themselves, rather than the 'sunlit way' which Sri Aurobindo recommends. There is a reflection here of the contrast in the West between the stoic ideal of the man who aspires to be, like God, without suffering, and the Christian ideal of the God who stoops to endure the suffering of man.

Yet Sri Aurobindo's 'sunlit way' is, I think, freed from two of those entanglements of the Hindu mind from which any Christian yoga would have to be freed, from Maya, the doctrine of cosmic illusionism and from psychological materialism. There is a tendency to deny the distinction (instead of recognizing the overlapping) of the psychological and the moral, and Sri Aurobindo assumes reincarnation, though this is quite unnecessary to his theory and practice as a whole. His *kinship* of quasi-pantheism (he does use the phrase 'divine spark', but has a quite definite doctrine of transcendence and of God as a Person) cries out for the Thomist doctrine of deiformity to purify and reconcile its apparently contradictory insights, and the Christian will be repeatedly struck by statements like 'Behind true personality stands the Divine Person', which seem waiting to be fulfilled in Christ. Because of this, and because it reiterates many basic truths of the spiritual life which need reiteration, the Catholic reader cannot but welcome this book, setting aside its brief and distorted view of his own faith. Yet just because it is concerned rather with the universal content of the Hindu tradition than with its special techniques, he will not (except for a few of the usual hints on posture, rightly recognized as not necessary) learn anything here which he cannot learn more safely and lucidly from one or other (and usually from all) of the mystical writers of the Church. What he perhaps needs to do is to take this book as a reminder to live more nearly as he believes.

M.D.H.P.

LESS THEY BE SENT. By Augustine Rock, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications, 1955; 11s.)

TREATISE ON PREACHING. By Humbert of Romans, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications, 1955; 12s. 6d.)

ÉTORIQUE ET PAROLE DE DIEU. By Pie Duployé, O.P. (Les Editions du Cerf, 1955.)

OF ST DOMINIC. By Bede Jarrett, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications, 1955.)

There are four books which tell of a renewed interest and some heart-rending about preaching. As our Lord preached, so the Church, or Christ continued, preaches to the end of time. *Verbum Dei non est datum*: you cannot hold up the Word of God. This apostolic function is, like the Church, indefectible. But it is exercised by mortal men; at the Bishops, as successors of the Apostles and in virtue of the plenitude of their priesthood, and then by others who are all in effect delegates of the Bishops. The message of God and truth of God will somehow be conveyed without distortion and without refraction at every period in the Church's long history. This we firmly believe; and all the while we deplore the lack of good preachers, and (even more serious) lack of devotion and zeal for this aspect of the apostolate.

There are many real problems. Not least, how does one make or produce preachers in any one generation? Our colleges and seminaries have, after all these years, produced priests who are, in this country, loved and appreciated—but not often by reason of their preaching. Are preachers born and not made, least of all by 'Sacred Eloquence' classes or voice production? We do not want to believe it, except in the sense that we must be born anew like believing Nicodemus and so able to preach from a fullness of heart that is 'alive unto God' and ripened to give to others the fruits of loving prayer.

Unless They be Sent is 'a theological study of the nature and purpose of preaching'. A study of this sort is needed, if only to make us see the greatness of the preaching office. Our author feels, and is, a pioneer in the field. There is no *tractatus de praedicatione*. And so he has gone into highways and byways and collected texts from sources old and new. The notes are surely the more valuable part of this work, and anyone wishing to pursue the theology of preaching will be grateful to A. Rock for his indispensable spade-work. Meanwhile he has given six chapters and an introduction. We like his titles: 'Why preach at all?' 'What to preach about.' 'The manner of preaching', etc. We hardly think that his work is enhanced by certain laboured explanations, such as 'The substantial formal cause of a thing is the form which by inhering in matter makes a thing to be what it is and not to be anything else. A thing is able to have many accidental formal causes which can

vary very widely without changing the nature of the thing itself (p. 102.) There is an application of Aristotelian principles in the ordering of theological matter which is effective and unobtrusive, as we might expect of a handmaid of theology. Such a use would be preferable, as invisible mending is preferable to a showy patch.

Humbert of Romans will be no more than a name to the general public. Yet he has always been a great figure in the Dominican family and his many writings have left their mark upon the Order. He was fifth Master-General and died in 1277. His *Treatise on Preaching* now rendered into English is eminently readable, and will be found still very practicable in our twentieth century. Humbert of Romans is concerned with principles and human realities which are true at all times. Take for instance the 'wicked reasons why some do not wish to preach': he deals effectively with excessive diffidence, false humility, excessive love of the quiet of the contemplative life, fear of sinning like other preachers, shirking laborious preparation, application and hard work, bodily fatigue, unpleasant pastors, the impiety of the people, or those who 'having preached once without receiving praise, are discouraged', etc. Altogether a human as well as a theological and helpful book, and replete with texts of Holy Scripture.

In *Rhétorique et Parole de Dieu* we have three essays, always thoughtful, sometimes provocative, and certainly indicative of a certain *malaise* in the spiritual climate of contemporary France. The great tradition of religious oratory would seem to appeal no more; yet the crowd of young men who go on pilgrimage to Chartres are athirst for a real orator—or should we say, apostle?—so that they too may have their hearts burning within them as he speaks of him who is Way, Truth and Life. Perhaps the most valuable idea is in the essay *Veuillir avec la Bible*. Now that we have got over the first fervours of the 'biblical renewal' in the Church, we have to learn to grow mature in our life-long reading of the Word of God. The monks of old knew this.

The reprinting of Fr Bede Jarrett's *Life of St Dominic* is something we can rejoice about. Here is a life of a preacher by a preacher in the same tradition and family. If you have not read this *Life of St Dominic*, then do so, and for a while forget the poor sermons you have heard, and learn something about St Dominic and Father Bede Jarrett.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

MARY IN OUR LIFE. By Rev. William G. Most, PH.D. (Mercier Press; 15s.)

This is a 'scientific piety' book. There are quite a number in circulation at present, all tending to show that Mariology is really a way of

ing us to love our Lady better as well as understand the theological truths which make Marian doctrine more precise and fruitful. Mr Most intends, as we are told on the cover, to co-ordinate and integrate the dogmatic truths underlying devotion to Mary with a clear, unsentimental and balanced application of these truths to the life of the soul.

For the dogmatic truths and their explanation he leans heavily on official pronouncements, which is excellent, and is, to my mind, another instance of the acceptance, by Marian writers in general, of the living voice of the Church as the first and most important source of guidance. It is happy that the occasional numerical measuring of the views of theologians.

Great stretches of the book are explanations of Christian virtues and ethical principles, given for the purpose of showing that our Lady, Mediatrix of all graces, model of all virtues, is closely and personally concerned in all that we do in our quest of perfection. This part of the book is perhaps more useful as a store of thoughts than as a persuasive explanation. His theme is that everything in the spiritual life is, in fact, in the hands of Mary, whether we are aware of it or not. With St Louis Montfort he teaches that those who realise this universal actual power and activity of Mary make quicker and easier progress towards perfection. 'Marian' saints have an easier path.

In six useful appendices we are given brief and meaty information, comment, demonstration, on the title 'The New Eve', on our Lady's knowledge, on Co-redemption, on the Protoevangelium and Apoc. 12, on St Dominic as author of the rosary, and on the brown scapular. In the last two Father Most leans towards what is traditional rather than what is critical.

SAINTS AND OURSELVES. Second Series. Various Authors. Ed. Philip Caraman, S.J. (Hollis and Carter; 12s. 6d.)

A dozen saints chosen and described by a dozen writers of distinction: what better recipe for a spiritual reading book of general appeal? And this book comes up to the high expectations raised by a glance at the contributors' names.

Christopher Dawson is the most impressive, with a statement, proved most arrestingly, that 'St Boniface was a man who had a deeper influence on the history of Europe than any Englishman who has ever lived'. Sir John McEwen, whose article is the best, translates us into the art and mind of the middle ages with his sketch of St Louis of France. Hilton Waldman had only to tell us the story of his saint (Joan of Arc) without frills to produce the most touching picture of them all. St Anne de Chantal (Vincent Cronin) is to my mind the most helpful.

St Albert the Great (Dr Sherwood Taylor) should not be missed by anyone interested in science and philosophy. Dr Sherwood Taylor has left many monuments of his great, penetrating, prehensile, honest mind. None, comparable in size, will do so much good as this portrait from life of an ideal Catholic scientist. The picture of St Hugh of Lincoln (Renée Haynes) is, in a curious way, more of a landscape than a portrait. Difficult to say why, as it is unmistakably a likeness.

Excitement (Bl. John Ogilvie, by Christian Hesketh), an interwoven thesis on sanctity (St Peter Claver, by Katharine Chorley), Welsh fire and wit (Blessed David Lewis, by Wyndham Lewis), unimpassioned remarks on Probabilism by a scientist (St Alphonsus Liguori, by Reginald J. Dingle) are all here provided in plenty, in good modern idiom. If there be a dim picture in this gallery it is George Scott Moncrieff's 'St Margaret of Scotland'—but perhaps this impression is due to excessive expectations of such a theme. The unique saint Nicholas von Flue, was given, of course, to E. I. Watkin, who begins thus: 'If during his later life Nicholas von Flue had eaten and drunk like other men, Switzerland as an independent State would probably not exist today.'

SAINT JOHN FISHER. By E. E. Reynolds. (Burns & Oates; 25s.)

In this companion volume to his *St Thomas More*, E. E. Reynolds has endeavoured to provide a modern life of St John Fisher which incorporates the materials brought to light in the years since Fr Bridgett published his pioneer work. From the outset it must be said that Catholics are greatly indebted to Mr Reynolds for producing a book at once scholarly and readable. There are however two criticisms which should be made.

Although at first there appear to be two flaws, on further consideration it will be seen that one is the child of the other. First, the character of the saint is never conveyed to the reader with sufficient conviction, nor are his actions and motives satisfactorily discussed. In chapter twenty-five, 'For his sister', for the first time do we get any picture of his personal love of our Lord crucified, the true substance beneath all the outward manifestations of sanctity and learning in colleges, sermons, controversial literature and asceticism. This lack is set beside some extremely interesting treatment of the people with whom St John lived and worked, and of the important events of his life.

The child of this first flaw is the rather dry and impersonal style of the book. If the author had tried to avoid the pitfalls of the traditional presentation of academic history and give a more personal picture of the man and saint the appeal of the book would have been much wider.

The book is pleasing in typography, illustrations and dust-cover and will undoubtedly become the standard life of St John Fisher. H.M.

NOTICES

LINS have recently started a new venture in introducing religious books in their cheap 'Fontana Books' series. With J. B. Phillips's version of the Epistles of the New Testament, *Letters to Young Churches*, they have had the success of selling 100,000 copies in a few months. A similar success was met with C. S. Lewis's titles. Now they have added Father Gerald Vann's *THE DIVINE PITY* to the series. This already well-known study of the social implications of the Beatitudes' now joins the glossy ranks of novels such as *Moulin Rouge*, and will doubtless achieve a circulation comparable with the other religious books in the series. (Fontana Books; Collins; 2s.).

GEORGE MACLEOD, leader of the Iona Community, in the Alex Wood memorial lecture for 1956, gave a very individualistic and spirited explanation of the sudden appearance, particularly in America, of a movement to 'community' in various religious bodies. He holds that a united Christendom is an impossibility, but that religious men and women are realizing that individualism in the present era of secularism is not enough and that some at least must break away from the life of the day and enter into close co-operation together in some sort of 'treaty'. He considers that we may well be entering the Age of the Spirit. His lecture *CHURCH PROSPECT* is published by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, price 1s. 6d.

★ ★ ★

EXTRACTS

MOUNT CARMEL, the Carmelite Quarterly edited from Wincanton, Somerset, contains a helpful article in its Spring issue on illness as a type of religious life. The authoress discusses the various aspects of religious life, and in particular the vows as reflected in the life of the invalid. With regard to the second vow she writes:

It may be difficult for the invalid who is not bound by any vow of chastity to see any connection between his condition and the virtue of that state. There is no doubt, however, that God can use ill health as a means of calling a man or woman to keep their hearts for him alone. To many illness means curtailment of opportunities for close friendship and for love and marriage. To some this loss will be the greatest part of the burden of ill health and the suffering of their

lonely and loveless state will seem too hard to bear with peace of mind. . . . Recognized as God's call to more intimate union with him such sorrow is shot through with joy, and the pain, though it remains unassuaged, becomes a welcome guest. Gradually the invalid will learn how he may co-operate with his condition and uniting his heart to the Sacred Heart of Jesus he will learn that even his dearest friendships are but poor shadows of the love that exists in the Heart of God. . . . He may be sure that God, who has called him to this dark knowledge, will give him courage and faith to walk in the path of chastity.

It is worth while recalling that St Thomas says that in religious life all physical mortifications are ordered to the perfection of chastity. In this way all the physical pains of the invalid may be directed towards the perfecting of this whole-making virtue.

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SPIRITUAL LIFE, the American Carmelite Quarterly, has an interesting Spring issue devoted to the question of Prayer. Mother Keyes, head of the Philosophy Department at Maryville College, St Louis, provides a balanced appraisal of the relation between Prayer and Art. While recognizing the dangers of idolatry that lies in the creative faculty of man, she shows how art can assist man in raising his heart to God.

However, we must keep ourselves calm and remember that art is not the one thing necessary. Bad taste is not always a *culpa* but rather a *poena peccati*, and like all punishments may be bitterly medicinal. But if we ourselves are responsible for the making of anything, let us see that it is made well for the glory of God. Only so shall we draw nigh to God and become like him. Good intentions will not supply for lack of vision and lack of skill. It is not enough to say 'Lord, Lord' and to work in religious subject matter. Ours is the more difficult task of putting our best into all our work, and yet worshipping neither it nor ourselves, laying it completely aside in those Sabbath moments within our day when we are invited to enter into the cloud, and we shall return to pour down fruitfulness upon the earth of our art, which in one sense does not matter, and in another matters most terribly. By itself, like all things that are made, it is nothing. But it is not by itself. 'It lasteth and it ever shall, because God loveth it' (Mother Julian).

This sound advice should be considered not only by the professional artist or craftsman, but by every man and woman, for by nature he or she is a creative animal and therefore is engaged in some way or other in making things.